

Mitchell Park

Sketch Master Plan

Jackson Township
Cambria County, PA



Acknowledgements

Pashek Associates would like to thank Jackson Township and the Jackson Township Recreation Board for their valuable contributions, support, and input during the Sketch Master Plan process. Their efforts were essential to the successful development of this plan.

Table of Contents

Project Introduction	1
Master Plan Process	1
<i>Sketch Master Plan Study Format</i>	2
<i>Project Goal</i>	2
<i>Public Participation</i>	2
Recommendations and Implementation.....	3
<i>Recommended Facilities</i>	3
<i>Estimate of Probable Construction Costs</i>	9
<i>Phased Capital Improvements Plan</i>	13
Appendices:	
<i>Appendix A: Potential Funding Sources</i>	
<i>Appendix B: Meeting Notes</i>	
<i>Appendix C: Excerpt from Jackson Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan</i>	
<i>Appendix D: PA One-Call Utility Providers List</i>	

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Jackson Township purchased property from the Central Cambria School District in 1987, with the goal of developing a public park. Since that time, recreation facilities have been developed and the property is now known as Mitchell Park.

In 2006, Jackson Township completed a Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan. Among the plan's recommendations were that a Master Site Plan be completed for Mitchell Park. Following this recommendation, Jackson Township retained Pashek Associates in 2007 to complete a Sketch Master Plan for the park. This Sketch Master Plan helped to refine the "vision" that the township had for the park, and resulted in an attractive marketing tool that will be used to attract future grant funding.

The Sketch Master Plan study took into account the park parcel, encompassing just over 65 acres, and the 10-acre area within the park property leased to the Chickaree Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club. All proposed recreation improvements are located on the remaining 55 acres of park land.

The Sketch Master Plan will provide a framework for making decisions regarding the development of park facilities. It will help the township meet its recreational programming needs. It is important to note that the Sketch Master Plan, developed as a part of this study, is meant to be a flexible tool for planning. Specific details of the design and the final locations of facilities may be adjusted through subsequent design.



MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Master planning includes analysis of natural features such as topography, hydrology, and vegetation, as well as coordination with interested citizens to develop policies for development. This multi-layered approach, involving Jackson Township representatives, local interest groups, and design professionals, yields both short- and long-term strategies for facility development.

A thoughtfully-developed master plan should identify ways to maximize recreational opportunities with the most efficient use of resources. For example, existing facilities are re-used wherever possible (and if desired) to reduce new development costs and prevent unnecessary disturbance of land. Likewise, careful planning can reduce operating and maintenance expenses. Therefore, efforts are made throughout the plan to identify improvements and strategies that are feasible and affordable Jackson Township.

Sketch Master Plan Study Format

The master planning process involves a number of steps, including:

- o Establishing goals and objectives for park development
- o Obtaining public input from township representatives and recreation interest groups (in this case, input was previously collected as part of the Jackson Township Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan)
- o Conducting a site analysis of existing park facilities and natural features
- o Determining the community's needs for recreational facilities
- o Preparing a sketch master plan for the park
- o Estimating construction costs
- o Developing a phased capital improvement plan
- o Identification of implementation strategies to finance proposed improvements

Project Goal

The broad goal for the Sketch Master Plan, as set by Jackson Township representatives, was to expand the existing recreation area to accommodate an increase in use while preserving a large portion of the park as natural area. This was to be accomplished by developing new facilities and by the improving existing facilities.

Public Participation

Public participation in the project design process is important in ensuring that the Sketch Master Plan is fully supported by the township and is sensitive to the needs of the community.

The public participation process for this study included reviewing recent public input collected during the course of a DCNR-funded Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan (Rec Plan) in 2006. Public participation during the Rec Plan centered around a project study committee that was formed to guide decisions made during the planning process. In addition to periodical study committee meetings, Jackson Township held a public meeting to solicit input from residents about township recreation issues and hear their opinions of the plan. Key person interviews were performed with individuals representing recreation interest groups. Furthermore, information was gathered through a citizen questionnaire sent to a sample of the township's population. The questionnaire posed questions about recreational facilities and programming within Jackson Township. The aforementioned methods are found the in the public participation section of the Rec Plan, which is included as an appendix to this report.

In addition, Pashek Associates met with a group of township representatives at the Mitchell Park site to discuss the Sketch Master Plan project. Minutes from this project meeting, as well as an excerpt detailing public input from the township's Comprehensive Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan, are included in the appendices of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Pashek Associates developed a Sketch Master Plan for Mitchell Park per the suggestions of township representatives and per information gathered from public input collected prior to this study. In late March 2007, Pashek Associates presented a draft version of the Sketch Master Plan, cost estimate, and of this narrative report to Jackson Township for review. Representatives of the township then offered suggestions for improving the draft plan after a discussion of the proposed facilities.

Recommended Facilities

Through subsequent plan revisions resulting from this discussion, Pashek Associates developed the final Sketch Master Plan. Recommendations of the final plan are described in the following section:

- ▶ Park Perimeter Walking Trail - Most of the park property remains forested, and a walking trail around the property perimeter would take advantage of this resource. The proposed trail is roughly 1.1 miles in length, and 5 feet wide. This plan recommends that the first 1000 feet on each end of the trail (near the proposed pavilions, and southwest of the snowmobile club lease area) be paved with crushed aggregate, such as limestone, and compacted. This will create a surface suitable to the high amount of foot traffic the trail will receive. However, because of the trail's length, paving the entire trail would become a major expense. Therefore, the remainder of the trail should be maintained as a natural surface.

The only accessories to the trail itself will be trail signage denoting the beginning of the trail, along with trail markers indicating distance traveled. The plan recommends a marker every 1/4 mile. Other uses (mountain biking, horseback riding, ATV's) should be prohibited on the trail to prevent damage to the trail surface.

- ▶ Picnic Pavilions - Three picnic pavilions are proposed in the forested area north of the existing basketball and tennis courts. The proposed pavilions are 60' x 40', each with a capacity for approximately 140 people. Pavilions are equipped with electricity for lighting and convenience outlets, potable water service, and should have concrete floors. Access to the pavilions and proposed horseshoe courts should be provided from accessible parking spaces. Each pavilion should be equipped with two large (2' x 6') standing charcoal grills for picnic use. Typical construction materials for pavilions of this size include heavy timber beams and either asphalt shingles or metal roof panels.

In addition to these larger picnic facilities, a small pavilion approximately 24' x 20' in size is proposed in the Sketch Master Plan. This pavilion is across the existing asphalt access path from an existing pavilion of similar size near the existing concession stand. The new pavilion will be easily accessible from the parking areas, and is adjacent to the concessions area, ball fields, and restrooms.



- ▶ Horseshoe and Sand Volleyball Courts - Accompanying the proposed large pavilions are horseshoe courts and a sand volleyball court. These activities often accommodate casual use by picnickers using nearby pavilions.



- ▶ Playground - Expansion of the existing playground was mentioned as a desired improvement to the park, and thus is a recommendation of this plan. The existing play equipment (excluding the swings) and chain-link fencing should be removed, and replaced with two separate play structures, one for use by ages 5-12, and one for younger children aged 2-5. These structures would both include numerous slides, play panels, and climbing devices, as well as wheelchair transfer stations.

This plan also proposes relocation of the existing swings to create space for the additional play equipment. All play equipment should be underlain by organic mulch safety surface. Underdrains and an aggregate base course should be installed beneath this surface to provide drainage during storm events. Underdrains should discharge into the adjacent open grassed swale adjacent to the existing parking lot.



- ▶ Ball Field Improvements - Pashek Associates recommends that field lighting be installed on the little league field to extend its use to include late evening hours. Bleachers (2 sets per field) should also be added to increase spectator capacity on both fields.



- ▶ Parking - Expansion of the existing parking area will accommodate the increase in use due to development of the proposed trail, and will provide extra parking for the proposed picnic area. The Sketch Master Plan also proposes two small gravel parking areas (40 spaces total) adjacent to the proposed large pavilions. Each area includes 2 paved accessible parking spaces. Having this amount of parking is an absolute minimum to allow unloading space for pavilion users, and to allow some users to easily access the pavilions without walking from the park's main parking area.

It is important to note that while some parking is needed for the proposed pavilions, parking areas should not be excessive. Development of expansive parking on the hillside near the pavilions would result in excessive earthwork and forest clearing. Thus, Pashek Associates recommends against development of large, expansive parking areas.

- ▶ Buffers - Pashek Associates strongly recommends that Jackson Township retain forest cover to the greatest extent possible near the park's borders. This forest cover will provide visual buffers between neighboring properties and park activities. Of particular importance are buffers near the proposed lighting at the park's little league field. A buffer full of tall shade trees may prevent glare from field lights from becoming a night-time nuisance to park neighbors.

Although the proposed trail traverses the perimeter of the park, it should not be located within 100 feet of the park border unless absolutely necessary.

- ▶ Restrooms - Plumbed restrooms were one of the desired items identified by township representatives. The restrooms proposed in the Sketch Master Plan are separate men's and women's restrooms in one 25' x 30' building. Each room will accommodate 3 users. The restroom building will be of split-faced concrete block construction, and will be equipped with sanitary sewer, potable water, and electric service. The restroom is also centrally located for use by all park facilities.

INSERT FINAL MASTER PLAN RENDERING

Estimate of Probable Construction Costs

An estimate of probable construction cost was developed for the proposed site improvements. This estimate was based on the assumption that all required labor will be performed by Jackson Township and that laborers will receive pay rates set by the township. The following cost estimate assumes that this NOT involve public bidding, and will NOT utilize Pennsylvania's 2007 prevailing wage rates. All costs are shown in 2007 dollars. To adequately account for inflation of costs for future improvements, Pashek Associates recommends a (4%) annual increase be budgeted for all work occurring after 2007.

Based on these requirements, the estimate of probable construction cost of the proposed improvements at Mitchell Park, in 2007 dollars, is **\$838,546**. Utilizing volunteer labor, donations of materials, and acquisition of grants, costs savings might be attained. Pashek Associates recommends that the township approach local businesses, community organizations, and private recreation groups to discuss possible partnerships. Such agreements may involve use of public works employees from the township and/or volunteers from those entities whose members may use the park's facilities.

INSERT COST ESTIMATE

Phasing

In a perfect world, Jackson Township would construct the park in a single phase, minimizing construction time and activities, disruptions, and realizing “economies of scale” construction cost savings. Unfortunately, few municipalities can afford to proceed in this manner and find it more feasible to phase construction over a period of time.

Pashek Associates recommends that the proposed improvements to Mitchell Park be constructed in a series of logical phases. Depending on the township’s financial situation and the success of grant writing efforts, this phasing plan may be expedited or lengthened. To construct improvements as quickly and efficiently as possible and to meet the desires of the township, we recommend two (2) phases of construction. The following phasing plan describes in detail the various improvements included in these phases.

Phase 1:

The initial phase of construction includes the following:

- ▶ restrooms;
- ▶ 2 large pavilions with concrete floor, electric service, potable water service, standing charcoal grills, and, trash receptacles;
- ▶ asphalt accessible parking and walkways;
- ▶ partial completion of the proposed gravel access road to allow access to parking for pavilions;
- ▶ associated earthwork, clearing and grubbing, and seeding; and
- ▶ project permitting, erosion and sediment control measures, and engineering / design fees.

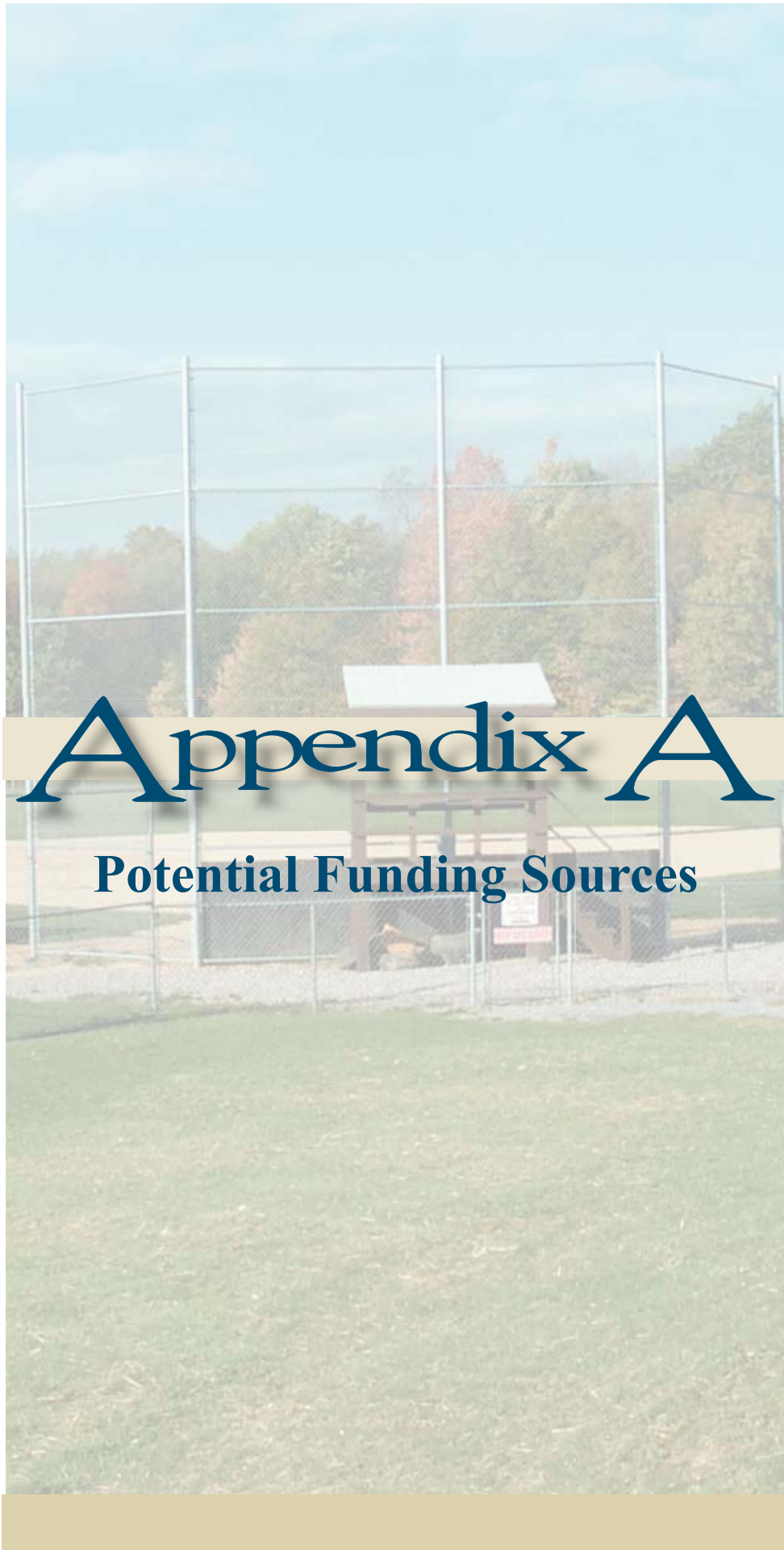
Phase 2:

Items reserved for the second phase of construction are listed below:

- ▶ reorganization of the park playground including removal of chain link fence and play equipment, relocation of existing swings, provision of two new pieces of play equipment, organic (mulch) safety surface, and underdrainage;
- ▶ 1 large pavilion (40’ x 60’) with concrete floor, electric and water service, standing charcoal grill, and trash receptacles;
- ▶ 1 small pavilion (24’ x 20’), with concrete floor and electric and water service;
- ▶ 2 new sets of bleachers at each existing ball field;
- ▶ field lighting at the existing little league ball field;
- ▶ asphalt accessible parking and walkways;
- ▶ expansion of the existing parking lot;
- ▶ parking lot area lighting;
- ▶ sand volleyball court;
- ▶ 4 horseshoe courts;
- ▶ associated earthwork, clearing and grubbing, seeding, and planting of deciduous shade trees; and
- ▶ erosion control measures and engineering / design fees.

It is important to note the importance of earthwork and utility service at Mitchell Park. Because limited topographic mapping was provided as part of the master plan project, earthwork costs are estimated from direct field observation at the park site. Also, the cost estimate does not include extra costs for electric service equipment other than service line, conduit, and fixtures (lights). Costs for other electric service equipment should be estimated by a qualified professional engineer with experience in utility system design in order to determine the need for other equipment.

INSERT PHASED COST ESTIMATE



Appendix A

Potential Funding Sources

The background of the page is a photograph of a baseball field. In the center, there is a wooden scoreboard structure with a white top. The field is enclosed by a tall chain-link fence. Behind the fence, there are trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The sky is a clear, light blue. The text 'Appendix B' is overlaid on the image in a large, dark blue, serif font, centered horizontally. Below it, the text 'Meeting Notes' is also centered in a smaller, dark blue, serif font. A solid tan horizontal bar is positioned behind the 'Appendix B' text, and a solid tan vertical bar is on the left side of the page.

Appendix B

Meeting Notes



Appendix C

Excerpt from Jackson Township
Recreation, Park, and
Opens Space Plan

The background of the page is a photograph of a baseball field. In the center, there is a wooden scoreboard structure with a white roof. The field is enclosed by a tall chain-link fence. Behind the fence, there are trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The sky is a clear, light blue. The text 'Appendix D' is overlaid on the image in a large, dark blue, serif font, centered horizontally. Below it, the text 'PA One-Call Utility Providers List' is also centered in a smaller, dark blue, serif font. A solid tan horizontal bar is positioned behind the 'Appendix D' text, and a solid tan vertical bar is on the left side of the page.

Appendix D

PA One-Call Utility Providers List

